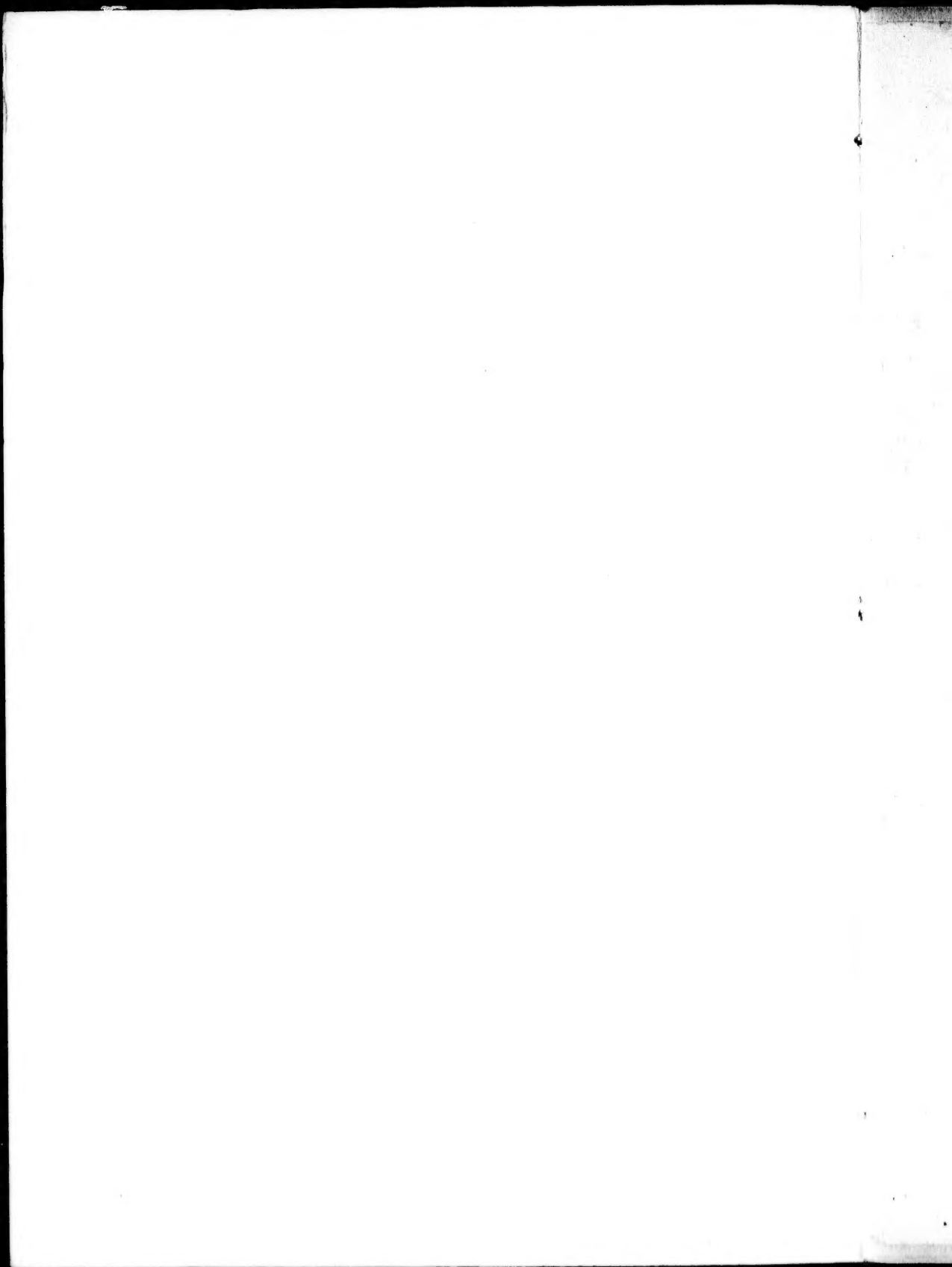




MEMORANDUM

Accompanying the Petition presented to the Provincial Legislature by the inhabitants of St. Johns, praying to be disunited from the County of Chambly, in order that they may become part of a new County to be established according to the plan set forth in the said Memorandum.

(21)

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH •

That considering the relative position of the principal localities comprised in the County of Chambly, and the very opposite nature of their interests, Your Petitioners have as yet had but little influence in the choice of their Representative in Parliament, in comparison with their population and the interests of their large Village or rising Town.

**That Your Petitioners hope that Your will
be pleased to take their humble Petition into consideration,
and carefully examine the Memorandum accompanying the
present Petition ; and they venture to hope that the reasons
therein set forth will convince Your that the
adoption of the above mentioned plan to divide the Coun-
ties, without modifying the same in so far as it relates to
them, will be an act of the greatest injustice to your Peti-
tioners.**

Wherefore Your Petitioners pray that they may be allowed to do so in the said Memorandum.

St. Johns, 19th February, 1853.

(Signatures,)

MEMORANDUM

Accompanying the Petition presented to the Provincial Legislature by the inhabitants of St. Johns, praying to be disunited from the County of Chambly, in order that they may become part of a new County, to be established according to the plan herein set forth.

It would be more than useless for us to endeavour to demonstrate here, that the Representative of a County in Parliament, besides the duty of working for and looking after the general interests of the Country, receives at the same time from his constituents the special mission of using his credit and influence with the Government, so as to obtain from it for his County the necessary assistance for turning to advantage its particular resources, and providing for the wants in which the several parts of the County have a common interest; and except where the general welfare of the Country is concerned, to oppose any measure which would affect the prosperity of his County, either by arresting the progress of trade and industry or by affecting its agricultural interests.

In order that it may be possible for the Member of a County to fulfil this second duty or second object of his mission to Parliament, it is necessary that there should be between the several parts of the County as it were a tie, or a centre where the interests common to all would unite; where these interests should mingle and become so identified with each other, that one party could not suffer from or complain of the favors granted to the other. And inasmuch as it is impossible for any Government, however well-disposed, to shower its favors equally upon all, and that as regards our Government in particular, a County, considered in the abstract and taken as a whole, is generally

the object of the attention and of the favors which it is in the power of the Government to grant, (these favors being distributed in the place or places from which the whole of the County will derive the greatest advantage,) it becomes the duty of the Legislator who establishes or alters the limits of Counties, to give the greatest attention to the formation of each County in particular, so that it may contain the greatest number and the greatest possible amount of interests common to every one of its parts; and the inhabitants of St. Johns are fully convinced that in this respect, the Government are fully determined, in making a new division of the Province into Counties, with a view to the establishment of a new system of Representation therein, to render every possible justice to the different localities of the Country; and in order that it should be enabled to follow out its benevolent and fair intentions, every party considering himself wronged by the measure contemplated, should make it a duty to obtain a hearing for his claim and bring forward his reasons.

Now the inhabitants of St. Johns think they can shew that the situation assigned to their large Village or rising Town, in the new division of the Country into Counties, is in no wise that which the state of its affairs, its position and interests, as well as those of the neighboring localities, require. To prove this, we shall in the first place shew that St. Johns has no community of interests or relation in business with the greater part of the County of Chambly, with which it is now united; we shall then shew that St. Johns is connected in the most intimate and regular manner, both as regards its interests and its daily intercourse, with a considerable extent of Country, situate so as to be capable of forming with St. Johns itself one of the most important Counties of the Country, having the greatest amount of interests of the same nature. We shall then conclude by shewing the title of St. Johns to become the chief place of a County which should be thus formed, in

order not to divide, and consequently weaken interests which nature and circumstances have so strongly united.

If we except the Parishes of L'Acadie and St. Luc, the inhabitants of St. Johns have distinct interests, separate and different from those of the other localities at present forming with them the County of Chambly.

To become convinced of the truth of this assertion, it is only necessary to glance at the Map of the Country, in order to perceive that in effect the very situation of the localities entirely separates St. Johns from the Parishes of Chambly, Longueuil, Boucherville and St. Bruno, which form the remainder of the County together with the two Parishes excepted as above mentioned.

Between the four Parishes just mentioned and those of St. Johns, L'Acadie and St. Luc, there is a sort of rising land which entirely divides the agricultural interests. The waters of the St. Lawrence naturally attract these parishes; and it is on this side that all four seek an outlet for their produce: Montreal receives them, and the inhabitants of these Parishes in going there on matters of every description, continually cross and meet each other, and transact business together while the inhabitants of St. Johns as well as those of L'Acadie and St. Luc, though belonging to the same County, remain perfect strangers to them, and are continually brought into contact among themselves; and it is at the Town of St. Johns, situate on the other declivity of the rising land already mentioned, and on waters which connect with Lake Champlain, that they meet every day to transact with each other, matters and business of every description, and especially to discuss and understand each other in relation to their agricultural interests. In a word, St. Johns is the point at which they meet and come into contact with each other daily.

St. Johns, then, really suffers from its union with the Parishes of Chambly, Longueuil, Boucherville and St. Bruno, as a County, and yet the amount of the popu-

lation of these four Parishes united, (and they are always interested in being united,) is such, that as often and as long as they please, they will be enabled to prevent St. Johns as well as L'Acadie and St. Luc, from deriving any benefit from their electoral franchise, by controlling at their will the choice of a Representative of the County, who must naturally become their devoted servant, inasmuch as he will be elected by them. But notwithstanding all this, we may be allowed to say, that we should be really sorry that any one should apply the foregoing observations to L. Lacoste, Esquire, the present Member for the County of Chambly, who is the elect of St. Johns as well as of the remainder of the County, and whose conduct at this juncture will prove that he has always been, as he still is, worthy of our confidence and our votes. But however honorable the conduct of our present Representative may be, this affords us no guarantee for the future, and in no wise alters our position as regards the remainder of the County.

We have shewn that this position renders us perfectly isolated as regards our interests and intercourse, from the greater part of the County, thus establishing that this position is unfavorable to us at the same time that it leaves it, as it were, impossible for the Members for the County of Chambly efficiently to represent the interests of all the localities composing it; for, if he obtains for his County, as at present constituted, any favor from the Government, with the greatest possible good-will, he will never be able so to manage that the whole of the County will enjoy or be *considered* to enjoy the benefit which might result from that favor.

But if the position of St. Johns was already unfavorable, when it could rely, when necessary, upon the support of L'Acadie and St. Luc, the interests of which are in a manner identified with those of St. John's, as shewn by the Petitions which these two Parishes are about addressing (if they have not already done so,) to the Legislature; how

much worse would it not be if the plan for making a new division of the country into Counties were adopted and passed into a law? For, according to that plan, the Parish of L'Acadie would cease to belong to the County of Chambly, and form part of the proposed County of Laprairie, so that the comparatively small Parish of St. Luc would alone remain to support St. Johns in the Electoral contest, which would evidently be equivalent to absolutely depriving both of the Electoral Franchise.

The inhabitants of St. Johns have long since felt this immense disadvantage, and would have submitted their complaints to the Legislature on this subject; but no favorable opportunity offered for doing so. Now that it is intended to establish for the Country a new distribution of Counties, which to all appearance will subsist for a very long time, we have thought that it is now time for us to raise our voice in order to claim our just share of Electoral influence, and to secure to ourselves the means of being enabled, at least from time to time, to enjoy the privilege of being represented in Parliament by a man of our choice, one suited to our taste and whose interests are our own. And to obtain this result, we earnestly pray that *the Town and Parish of St. Johns be detached from the County of Chambly and entirely cease to form part thereof*. And inasmuch as, notwithstanding the importance we may, with reason, attribute to our locality, we are not sufficiently presumptuous to hope that the Legislature will consent to give us a special Representative for the Town of St. Johns, yet we ask, at least, to be united into a County with those parts of the Country contiguous to and surrounding us, and the interests of which daily mingle and become identified with ours.

And, those parts of the Country with which we desire to be united in order to form a new County under the name of *the County of St. Johns, with St. Johns for its Seat*, are the Parishes of *L'Acadie, St. Valentin, St. Cyprien, St. Jacques, and St. Luc*, adding thereto *the Parish and the whole of the Seigniorie of Lacolle*.

We acknowledge that the County thus formed would perhaps be a little too populous, which cannot be considered as a very serious inconvenience, as there only would be the Seigniorship of Lacolle which would be at any considerable distance from the Seat of the County; but this distance becomes as it were nothing, considering the great facility of communication established by the Champlain and St. Lawrence Railroad, between St. Johns and Lacolle, which, by this means, are only at the distance of half-an-hour from one another. Besides, the Village of Lacolle is only twenty miles from St. Johns.

With regard to the other localities, taking as a point of departure (in order to shew the distance) the most central part, the Church-square for instance, the farthest of the said localities, from St. Johns, would be St. Cyprien, which is situate at a distance of 15 miles from the former; but as soon as St. Cyprien becomes part of the proposed County of St. Johns, that distance would soon be reduced to about eleven miles, by the establishment of a more direct road, which has been long talked of. The same may be said of St. Jacques, which, by means of a new road, which has also been long talked of, will be brought within nine miles of St. Johns. It is true that it is at present only eleven miles distant from it. The distance between l'Acadie and St. Luc and St. Johns is only six short miles, and between St. Valentin and the latter, only twelve.

We earnestly entreat the Legislature to take into their consideration this statement, which we vouch for as authentic.

Doubtless, if the Government in forming the new Counties, had not been naturally inclined to deviate as little as possible from the existing order of things, and to leave to their intercourse the Electors who were accustomed to meet at the different polls; doubtless also, if it had not been correctly informed of our anomalous position in the County of Chambly, and of our intimate and daily

intercourse with the different localities of which we desire and pray that the new County of St. Johns may be formed, it would never have thought of forming a new Conniy of Lacolle; but would at once have done what reason and the well understood interests of St. John's and the neighboring country required. For the union of different localities into a County, pre-supposes and ought always to allow of a union of interests, resulting from the respective positions of the localities, and of the amount of intercourse with one another. And this is precisely the case with the parts of the Country of which the County of St. John would consist. They have each a soil, and a system of cultivation, exactly alike in both; they observe and study each others agricultural improvements in order to turn them to account; their improvements in stock are inter-communicated and made common; their lands are watered by the same streams, and drained by the same water courses or discharges; their road-labor is in common; everywhere they meet and cross each other on their public roads, and they enjoy as they ever will enjoy together, the improvements now made and those which remain to be made. But it is particularly at St. Johns that they see and meet each other incessantly, in the pursuit of their various affairs and for the supply of their various wants. At St. Johns they buy and sell in a market which brings them into direct intercourse with the markets of the United States, and which gives to them the advantage of selling at a price as high, if not higher, and at the same time of buying as cheaply all they require as in any other market in Canada. It is natural, therefore, that these sections of the Country should aim at forming a closer connection, by uniting themselves with St. Johns, and by endeavouring at the same time to render St. Johns, more and more their common centre of business. For this reason, these localities considering it not enough that they trade with St. Johns, there seek justice and legal advice, sell their produce and purchase their sup-

plies—are desirous moreover to resort thither from time to time for the purpose of naming the Representative of their interests in Parliament, uniting with us, in that behalf, in a Petition that St. Johns may become the chief place of a County which may bear its name. The Parishes of l'Acadie, St. Valentin, St. Luc and St. Jacques, either have petitioned, or will petition the Legislature to that effect; and doubtless St. Cyprien would have done the same if the scheme of a County of Lacolle had not suggested the hope that it might itself become the chief place of a County; for St. Cyprien, as well as the other surrounding Parishes is connected by interest and commerce with St. Johns.

The representations of these important Parishes, which, together with St. Johns, appeal in the name of a population of 13,694 souls cannot fail to be heard and regarded by our legislators. Justice will be done, and St. Johns will become what its geographical position, and its trade and business capabilities require that it should be, *the chief Town of a fair and flourishing County.*

We shall prove, by figures, that it is impossible that the Legislature should disregard this desire and this request, without a violation, not only of what is strictly proper, but also of what is positively a duty.

Judging by the statement we have just made, it is evident that St. Johns is already, in fact, in all matters of business, the centre and chief Town of the sections of country which we desire to have included in the future County of that name: and when we shall have made a statement of the trade and general business transacted there, it appears to us impossible that the Legislature should refuse to sanction that law which nature and circumstances have already made; we mean that it cannot refuse to grant it by a legal title that *qualification of a chief Town* which, in fact, it already enjoys. The details into which we shall enter, will clearly prove that we have used no exaggeration in speaking of the intercourse and the relations of in-

terest which connect St. Johns with the neighboring Parishes, and especially with those of which we are desirous to form the County of St. Johns.

We do not think fit to quote here the axiom, *that there is no trade without intercourse*, and as no one will suppose that the population of St. Johns, although considerable for a Village, can have consumed, or used for its purposes, the quantity of commodities sold there in the course of last year, it will be concluded, that the traders of St. Johns must necessarily have had a great number of customers from without its limits; and naturally it is from the surrounding country that those customers come.

There are in St. Johns fifty-one stores licensed by the Corporation to retail merchandize and commodities of all kinds, as in our large Cities, the difference consisting only in the quantity; and in the course of the last year these fifty-one stores have sold, as it has been established by parties who have honestly inquired into the matter, merchandize to an amount exceeding four hundred thousand dollars, or £100,000, irrespectively of the produce of any sales effected by two stone-ware manufactories of sufficient importance, and irrespectively, also, of the baking trade and the hotels.

To this may be added a business in sawed lumber to the amount of from 60 to 80 thousand dollars, done at the Steam Mill of Messrs. Pierce and Cook, who buy wood and send it planed and tongued to the United States markets. There are also at St. Johns two extensive Tanneries where every variety of leather of good quality is manufactured. There are stores of every description, and even a Foundry and Printing-office. The wonders of the electric telegraph are here displayed, there being two offices in regular operation.

In order to create the state of affairs above described, a description by no means exaggerated, it is absolutely necessary that there should exist between St. Johns and the surrounding Districts, a very active and uninterrupted connexion, and as a natural result, a genuine identity of interests.

To such an extent is St. Johns a centre of business, that its Post Office is in direct communication with twenty-six other offices; it is moreover the distributing office for the Southern part of the St. Lawrence, and despatches every day four regular mails. Thirteen Parishes and two Townships are connected with St. Johns for Judicial purposes, and a similar number may be enumerated as having with St. Johns relations of a Commercial nature.

St. Johns contains three educational establishments of a superior character, where the French and English languages are taught; two of which are for boys and the other for girls. It is proper to remark here that Government, convinced of the importance of St. Johns, appears disposed to favor the cause of education here by special grants which form part of the estimates to be submitted to the Legislature in the course of the present Session. We have only to add, in order to afford as complete as possible an insight into the business done at St. Johns, that, in the course of one year, no less than two hundred thousand (200,000) minots of grain of every kind were bought in the St. Johns market, and exported to the United States, not to mention the quantity purchased for home consumption.

St. Johns possesses moreover, a Railroad terminus, and is situate at the head of a canal and upon the shores of Lake Champlain, thereby presenting easy communication with all parts of Canada and the United States.

Such is a description of St. Johns, rendered with all possible fairness and as much exactness in its details as it is in our power to afford.

It appears to us that reason and justice unite in asserting that it would certainly be an absurdity, any longer to refuse to a locality of such importance, some influence in the representation of its County, and in the choice of a Member to represent its interests in Parliament.

The object of the Petition accompanying the present Memorial, and addressed by us to the Legislature, is to put

an end to this abnormal state, and to ward off a condition still more detrimental to our interests ; and so convinced are we of the goodness and justice of our cause, that we should be more than certain of its success, had we nothing to fear from prejudice and intrigues which a blind local interest has already brought, or is at all events disposed to bring into play against us. We therefore crave permission to anticipate certain difficulties and obstacles which have already been raised.

These obstacles or difficulties have been brought forward by the County of Huntingdon and of Chambly itself, of which latter County we form a part. And first, as regards the County of Chambly ; it is asserted that by cutting off St. Johns and St. Luc, its population will be greatly reduced. Now the Village of Longueuil which is evidently progressing, is in this County, and undoubtedly before many years, have expired, it will by its increase more than adequately compensate by its progress for the loss in population, which this County would suffer, were justice done to our petition. The Parish of Chambly, itself, complains that Longueuil would naturally become the chief place of the County, were our petition granted, and threatens on this account to oppose our separation from the County of Chambly. We shall offer no observations on this head, as it appears to us, that it would be an Act of injustice towards the Legislature to conceive, that they would be disposed to sacrifice our interests to those of Chambly.

With respect to the County of Huntingdon, which, in pursuance of the division of Counties contemplated in the Legislative measure introduced on this subject, would have been divided into two, thus forming the new Counties of Lacolle and Laprairie, we venture to assert that this plan was only adopted, because at the moment, no better one presented itself or was suggested to the Government or to the honorable author of the plan of division in question. Dividing the County of Huntingdon, so as to form two,

it is natural enough to suppose that it would be advisable, in order to cause as little change as possible, to form a separate County of each division. But now, when it must be acknowledged that besides the subdivisions to be effected in the County, there existed an evil and inconvenience, a real suffering to be got rid of in the neighbouring County; now, when it is evident that the contemplated County of Lacolle, is by no means a source of satisfaction to some of those whom it was intended to annex thereto; now, when it is equally clear that the inhabitants of some of the localities, which it is designed to include in the new County of Laprairie, do not find it to their advantage, and have formally opposed the scheme, as, witness the Petitions from l'Acadie and St. Jacques, would reason and justice permit to be passed over without attention, the appeal of five Parishes, containing a population of 13,694 souls? and parties too, who by their Petitions to Parliament, seek while yet there is time, an order of things altogether different to that contemplated at the period of the preparation of the measure in question? No, no, we dare not for one moment conceive that so many voices would in vain be raised to that Great Body, charged as the supreme tribunal, with the duty of rendering justice to the injured portions of the population of the Country! Parliament will hear us then, and render us that justice which is our due.

And to conclude our observations with respect to the difficulties which might be raised to the plan which we suggest, and which we are desirous should be carried out, permit us to observe that, if by means of our plan the Parishes of l'Acadie and St. Jacques are detached from the County of Laprairie, to which it is proposed to annex them, we leave, as a compensation to that County, the Parish of St. Edouard and the Township of Sherrington, whose inhabitants can raise no plausible objection to be united to the County of Laprairie, with which their business has a much more intimate connection than with the contemplated County of

Lacolle ; and, as regards the Parish and Seignior of Lacolle itself, we care not for it, further than that it should be to its own advantage to form part of the County of St. Johns ; so that were it better for that locality to be united to one of the two Counties about to be formed out of the County of Beauharnois and part of the County of Huntingdon, we should be rejoiced at the advantage it would derive therefrom. The County of St. Johns, formed in accordance with our petition, would yet be sufficiently large and important without Lacolle.

We here draw to a conclusion our Memorandum, though we might yet have added several weighty considerations—but it appears to us that we have already said more than will suffice to demonstrate that the steps we have taken with the Legislature, are founded upon principles of reason and justice, as well as upon the nature of the places and the circumstances of the case.

Pleading in so good a cause, hopes of success tempt us to anticipate our joy, trusting to the impartiality and justice of the tribunal in whose hands the issue lies. We are not, besides, the only parties interested in the success of this cause. The voice of important localities joining with us in pursuit of the same end, contributes greatly to strengthen our hopes and to confirm us in the belief that they are too well founded, not to ensure their being realized in the end.

St. John's, February, 1853.

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